

Municipal Court Clerk

Department Description

The Franklin County Municipal Court Clerk is the legal custodian for the accurate and timely processing and safe keeping of court records and funds. Fundamental to American jurisprudence, the Clerk is the essential impartial entity in the judicial system. Where the fifteen judges dispense justice, the Clerk is required to perform the administrative tasks associated with their legal interpretations and judgments. The Clerk delivers the public services in “the people’s court” by offering information and support regarding all criminal, traffic, environmental and civil cases filed in the court. Continual services regarding the status of cases, preparing numerous dockets, processing thousands of legal documents, receipting and disbursing funds as well as processing bails are relied upon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Law enforcement agencies, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, attorneys, the City Attorney’s Office, the County Prosecutor and the Public Defender’s Office are just a few of the judicial agencies that rely on the Clerk’s services so that they may continue their services.

Mission

To impartially and professionally deliver the required administrative public services so that the judicial system may adequately function.

Strategic Priorities for 2003

- Enhance services by developing technological advancements for easier accessibility:
 - Implement law enforcement Kiosk to speed up the prisoner slating process
 - Send all subpoenas to Columbus police officers via e-mail
 - Provide pre-trial notices to the public in court rooms
 - Issue traffic citations electronically
 - Automate telephone payment services
- Continue vigilantly to collect all dollars owed the city from court costs and fines
- Continue character and competency leadership initiatives to encourage cooperation, unity and teamwork for a highly diverse work force

2003 Budget Issues

- The Municipal Court Clerk's 2003 general fund budget includes funding of \$8,592,057 for 172 full-time positions.
- Efforts to collect unpaid fines and costs will continue in 2003; however funding for these activities have been shifted to a special revenue fund created by the City Auditor to handle fees charged for collection of delinquent amounts. The Clerk estimates the general fund savings to approach \$420,000 in 2003.
- The Municipal Court Clerk will continue to explore opportunities to use technology to improve service and communications to the public.

DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL SUMMARY					
DIVISION SUMMARY	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Appropriated	2002 Estimated	2003 Proposed
Municipal Court Clerk	\$ 9,685,879	\$ 10,189,726	\$ 11,349,975	\$ 10,980,045	\$ 11,318,396
TOTAL	\$ 9,685,879	\$ 10,189,726	\$ 11,349,975	\$ 10,980,045	\$ 11,318,396

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY CHARACTER					
MUNICIPAL CT CLERK GENERAL FUND	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Appropriated	2002 Estimated	2003 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 7,006,071	\$ 7,930,358	\$ 8,314,573	\$ 8,278,991	\$ 8,592,057
Materials & Supplies	143,989	108,036	143,000	131,792	161,500
Services	582,078	924,653	190,034	268,270	187,057
Other Disbursements	74	-	-	1,048	-
Capital	25,494	9,162	-	15,000	-
TOTAL	\$ 7,757,705	\$ 8,972,210	\$ 8,647,607	\$ 8,695,101	\$ 8,940,614
MUNICIPAL CT CLERK COMPUTER FUND	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Appropriated	2002 Estimated	2003 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 410,986	\$ 489,828	\$ 523,188	\$ 504,847	\$ 600,955
Materials & Supplies	115,572	77,834	309,700	208,264	698,350
Services	828,731	581,951	864,480	825,009	1,028,477
Capital	572,886	67,902	1,005,000	746,824	50,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,928,173	\$ 1,217,516	\$ 2,702,368	\$ 2,284,944	\$ 2,377,782

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY FUND					
FUND SUMMARY	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Appropriated	2002 Estimated	2003 Proposed
General	\$ 7,757,705	\$ 8,972,210	\$ 8,647,607	\$ 8,695,101	\$ 8,940,614
Municipal Court Computer Fund	1,928,173	1,217,516	2,702,368	2,284,944	2,377,782
TOTAL	\$ 9,685,879	\$ 10,189,726	\$ 11,349,975	\$ 10,980,045	\$ 11,318,396

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL SUMMARY					
DIVISION	FT/PT*	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Authorized	2003 Authorized
Municipal Court Clerk	FT	171	169	172	172
	PT	-	-	-	-
Computer Fund	FT	7	7	7	8
TOTAL		178	176	179	180
*FT=Full-Time PT=Part-Time					

PROGRAM SUMMARY- COURT CLERK							
Program/Activity	Description	2002 Budgeted			2003 Budgeted		
		FT	PT	Proposed	FT	PT	Proposed
Administration	The administration division ensures the smooth operation of the seven other divisions of the Clerk's office by preparing, submitting and tracking the annual budget; interviewing, evaluating and hiring all deputy clerks; purchasing and maintaining repair of all equipment; and managing personnel and maintaining payroll records. In addition, administration oversees legal compliance with applicable statutes, rules and case law, prepares statistical reports required by law, reviews and refers cases to the appropriate authorities for collection proceedings; and evaluates, investigates and responds to inquiries by the public.	19	-	\$ 1,374,692	19	-	\$ 1,348,544
Accounting/Finance	The accounting/finance division is responsible for the collection and accounting of fines, court costs, fees and bail for criminal, environmental and traffic charges filed in the Franklin County Municipal Court. The division is also responsible for accepting and disbursing civil division funds paid to the court for costs and fees, plus judgment and garnishment amounts. The accounting/finance division processes all mail payments, prepares receipts for monies collected, distributes funds to the proper political subdivisions and parties and makes a general accounting of all monies received and disbursed in the Clerk's office.	29	-	1,473,999	29	-	1,542,494
Civil	The civil division accepts dockets and maintains records for all pleadings and motions filed in civil cases over which Franklin County Municipal Court has jurisdiction. These cases include civil actions in contract, accounts, notes, personal injury, property damage, forcible entry and detainer, replevin and attachment in amounts up to \$15,000.	34	-	1,576,929	34	-	1,656,088
Communications Center	(1) The communications center promotes ongoing communications and delivery of public service to the general public, law enforcement agencies, attorneys, court personnel, other courts and governmental entities. Communications is charged with the following responsibilities: opening, logging and processing mail for the criminal/traffic division and traffic violations bureau; processing traffic and criminal fax correspondence (including case payments); preparing traffic and criminal cases for the accounting/finance division to accept payment; returning traffic and criminal payments that are inaccurate; processing applications for the expungement of records (including maintaining and securing records ordered expunged); processing Mayors' Court transfers; and filings and responding to public record requests pertaining to the status and disposition of cases.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Criminal/Traffic	The criminal/traffic division accepts and processes all documents related to criminal and traffic charges in which citations are issued within the jurisdiction of the Franklin County Municipal Court. In addition, the division processes and reports all applicable records to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles. The criminal/traffic division is open to the public 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.	81	-	3,783,253	81	-	3,929,053
Environmental	(2) The environmental division processes and maintains the environmental court dockets. The division has exclusive jurisdiction over criminal and civil actions to enforce building, housing, health or safety codes applicable to premises intended for use as a place of human habitation.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Office of Information Services	The office of information services supports both the Clerk and the Court with the data processing needs of all divisions. User-fee revenues from court costs and filing fees fund a growing number of technology projects. The division continues to expand the opportunities available with new technologies to reach the goals of the Clerk and Court.	7	-	2,702,368	8	-	2,377,782
Traffic Violations Bureau	The traffic violations bureau keeps records of and processes all traffic citations issued by the Columbus Police, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Franklin County Sheriff and other law enforcement agencies throughout Franklin County.	9	-	438,734	9	-	464,435
TOTAL		179	-	\$ 11,349,975	180	-	\$ 11,318,396

(1) Communications center personnel and budget included within administration section.
(2) Environmental personnel and budget included within criminal/traffic.

